



Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans

HB 1774 & SB 1092 Summary

★ **Establishes a Commissioner of Veterans Services**

- Serves as an advocate for veterans, reporting directly to the governor
- Elevates veterans services and establishes statewide accountability

★ **Consolidates Veterans Services Into a Single Agency**

- Creates a Department of Veterans Services
- Combines veterans benefit claims, care center and cemetery services

★ **Establishes a Policy-level Board of Veterans Services**

- Responsible for monitoring the welfare of Virginia's veterans and setting policies to enhance veterans services across the Commonwealth
- Board will have subcommittees on benefit services, care centers, and cemeteries
- Local/regional advisory groups also will advise the board

★ **Creates a Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations**

- Provides a vehicle for veteran service organizations to meet, discuss and collaborate with the Department of Veterans Services
- Focuses on ways to provide direct and indirect support for Virginia veterans and their families

★ **Establishes a Veterans Services Foundation**

- Raises funds and administers the Veterans Services Fund



Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans **Rationale for Proposed Restructuring**

- ★ **Improves services for Virginia's veterans and their families**
- ★ **Gives veterans a clear, high level voice in federal, state and local government**
- ★ **Creates a new, unified structure that will function in a business-like and entrepreneurial manner**
- ★ **Elevates the board for veterans services to enhance its authority, focus and importance**
- ★ **Eliminates duplication of administrative functions**
- ★ **Enhances fund-raising efforts to provide more financial and human resources for veteran services**



Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans **Contributing Organizations**

★ **Governor's Advisory Commission for Veterans' Affairs**

- Eleven retired commissioned and non-commissioned officers
- Developed recommendations to improve veterans services in Virginia
- Conducted public hearings around the state and investigated other states
- Delivered final recommendations and report in December 2002

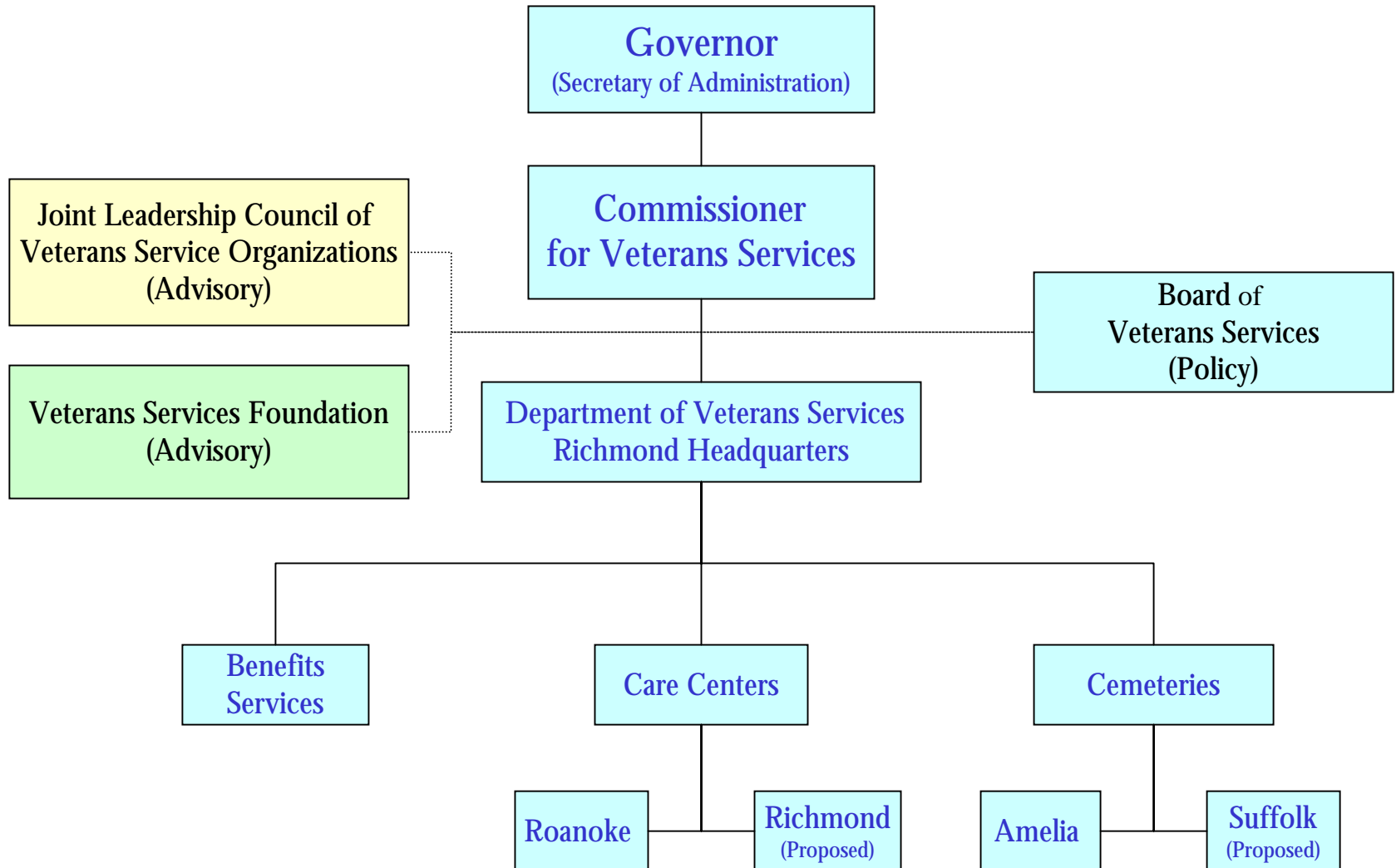
★ **Leadership Advisory Committee**

- State commanders of 8 principal veterans service organizations
 - ◆ American Ex-POW, American Legion, American Veterans (formerly known as AMVETS), Disabled American Veterans, Military Officers Association of America (formerly known as The Retired Officers Association), Military Order of the Purple Heart, Non Commissioned Officers Association and Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Worked closely with the Commission in developing its recommendations
- Unanimously supports the veterans reform agenda



Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans

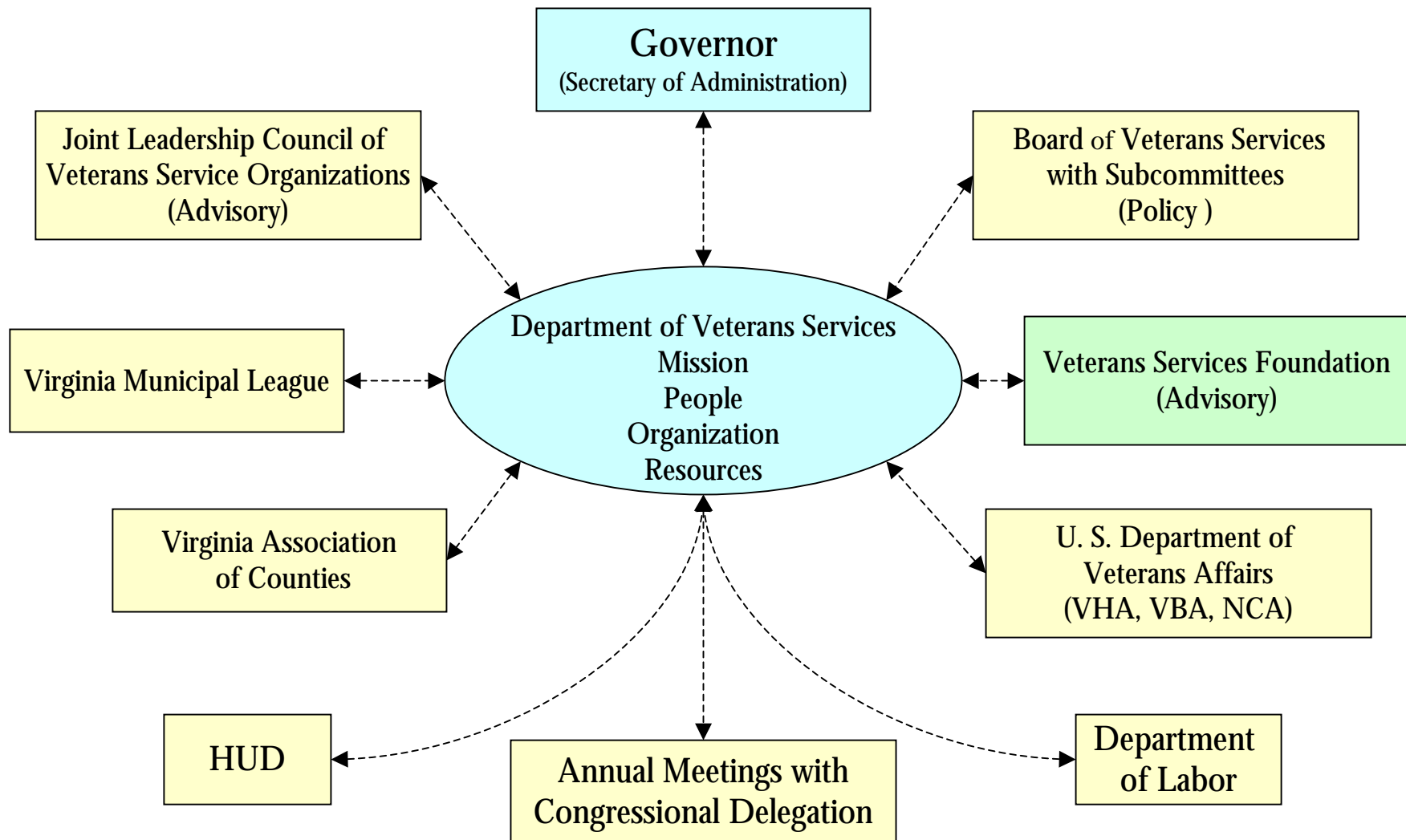
Proposed Restructuring of Veteran Services





Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans

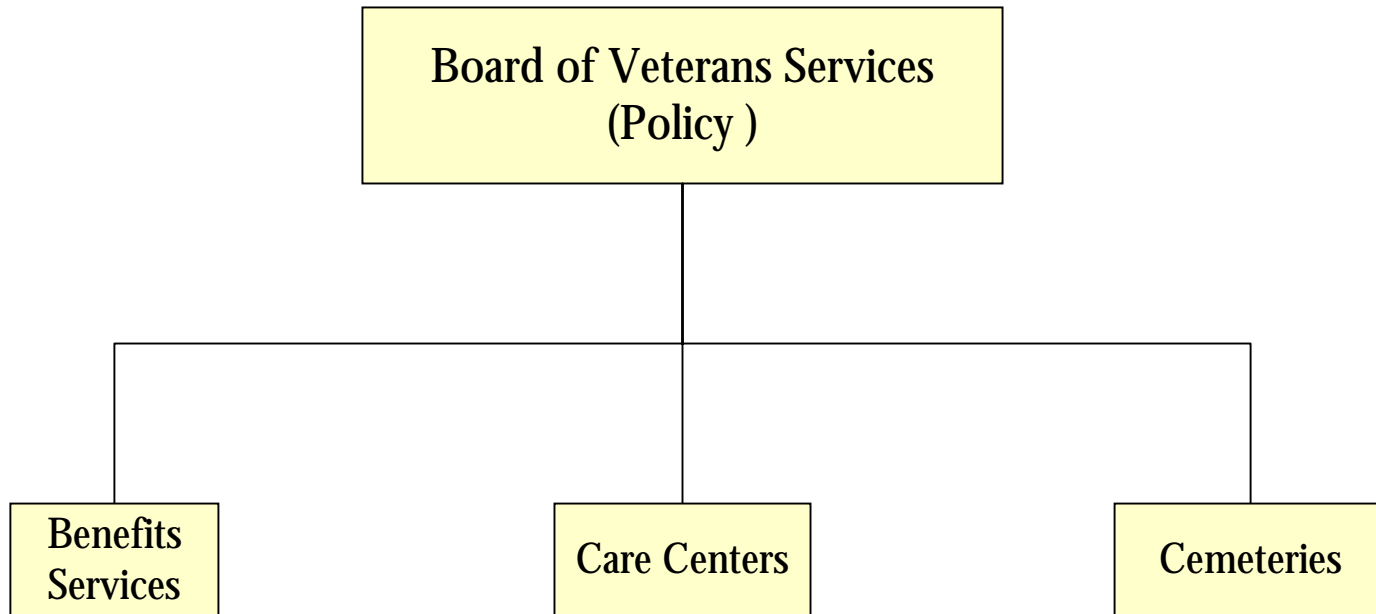
Supporting Agencies & Organizations





Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans

Veterans Services Board & Subcommittees





Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans **Board of Veterans Services**

★ **Elevate to policy-making board**

- Responsible for monitoring the welfare of Virginia's veterans and setting policies to enhance veterans services across the Commonwealth
- Board will have subcommittees on benefit services, care centers, and cemeteries

★ **Membership: 11 Governor appointees, 3 House members, 2 Senate members & Commissioner of Veterans Services (17 total)**

★ **Balanced geographical representation**

★ **Seek expertise in:**

- Best practices in benefits claims services, medical and health care management, or cemetery operations;
- Performance measurements and general management principles; and
- Nonprofit volunteer operations and management.

★ **Help establish local/regional advisory boards, along with Commissioner & Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations**



Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans

Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations

- ★ **Vehicle for veteran service organizations to collaborate with the Department of Veterans Services on meeting the needs of Virginia's veterans**
- ★ **Membership: Representatives of qualifying veterans service organizations and the Commissioner of Veterans Services**
- ★ **Qualifying veterans service organizations:**
 - Composed principally of and controlled by veterans of the United States Armed Forces;
 - A registered nonprofit organization in good standing, incorporated for the purpose of promoting programs designed to assist veterans of the armed forces of the United States and their Virginia-domiciled surviving spouses, orphans, and dependents; and
 - Active and in good standing with its parent national organization, if such parent organization exists.
- ★ **Focus on ways to provide direct and indirect support for Virginia veterans and their families**
- ★ **Help establish local/regional advisory boards to support veterans services, along with Commissioner & Board of Veterans Service**



Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans

Local-Regional Advisory Boards

★ **Provide local community support for veterans services, particularly the Roanoke Care Center**

- Encourage and maintain vital connections with the local community for each veterans facility statewide
- Customize each facility to the local and regional setting
- Improve quality and range of services at each facility

★ **Commissioner of Veterans Services will work with all interested parties to establish local advisory boards statewide**

- Coordinate with the Board of Veterans Services and the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations
- Establish guidelines for local advisory boards to maximize citizen input and ensure efficient and effective collaborations



Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans **Veteran Services Foundation**

- ★ **Raise funds for veterans services and programs**

- Private donations, grants and other resources

- ★ **Administer the Veterans Services Fund**

- Non-reverting trust fund (does not revert to the General Fund)

- ★ **Governed by its own Board of Trustees**

- 8 citizens appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly, and Secretary of Administration ex officio
- Majority of trustees will have significant management or financial experience with large private or non-profit organizations

- ★ **Collaborate with the Department of Veterans Services & the Board of Veterans Services**



Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans

Veterans Care Center Endowment Fund

★ *Current Virginia Code requirements:*

- Must be used to support programs, activities, and services for residents, to enhance the Care Center and the lives of residents
- Not intended to be used as operating revenue for the Care Center

★ **HB 1774 and SB 1092 preserve these requirements**

★ **Endowment Fund balances transfer to the new, non-reverting Veterans Services Fund**

- Administered by the Veterans Services Foundation Board of Trustees

★ **Legislative restriction – transferred funds must be used for:**

- Capital repair & replacement projects
- Programs, activities & services for residents of veterans care centers
- Other veterans programs, activities & services identified by the audit
- Based on audited accounting on June 30, 2003

★ **Endowment Fund balances not used for operations**



Improving Services to Virginia's Veterans

Facts on Virginia's Veterans

- ☆ **In 2000, there were over 780,000 veterans in Virginia, excluding their families**
 - Represents about 10% of Virginia's total population
- ☆ **Virginia's veterans received over \$1.3 billion in total federal benefits in 2001, due to the Virginia Department of Veterans' Affairs' efforts**
 - VDVA brought in over \$530 in federal benefits for every \$1 spent by the state on benefit claims support in 2001
- ☆ **As of July 2002, veterans between the ages of 20 and 64 accounted for 10.7% of the state's total classified workforce, whereas veterans of the same age group comprised 6.6% of Virginia's total population.**